



Swiss Embassy

News letter

February, 2023

n.8



Dear compatriots and friends of Switzerland,

Hopefully you had a good start into the new year. I had the pleasure to get to know some of you on the occasion of the cocktail for Swiss citizens organised by the Embassy in autumn 2022. Those of you who could not attend I look forward to getting to know in the course of this year.

Let me briefly introduce myself. I assumed my duties as Ambassador to Ghana, Benin and Togo in August 2022. Before moving to Accra, I was in charge of the Global Programme on Migration and Forced Displacement at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), based in Bern. Since joining the Federal Department for Foreign Affairs (FDFA) in 2006, I have spent many years abroad, with postings in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Moldova. Before the FDFA, I was working as a Microfinance Specialist in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan.

Last summer has seen substantial changes in the staffing of the Embassy. A new Deputy Head of Mission, Ms. Simone Haerberli, a new Head of Administration, Ms. Tatjana Hediger, a new Deputy Head of Administration, Ms. Gloria Giugno, and a new Consular Officer, Ms. Le Nguyet Schmid, all arrived in Accra in July-August 2022. Particularly notable in this context: For the first time since its establishment, the Swiss Embassy in Accra is headed by a female Ambassador and run by an all-female management team.

Six months have passed since the arrival of my family – my husband, Kiromiddin, and our two kids, Aron (13), and Livia (8) – to Ghana. These months have been extremely busy, eventful and intense. They have been filled with many heart-warming encounters and memorable moments. I had the privilege to present my credentials to the President of the Republic, to encounter local kings and queens, and to meet with such notable persons as former President John Kufuor or Ghana's Chief Imam. Especially my travels outside of Accra – to the Eastern, Volta, Ashanti, Bono, Central, and Western Regions – have left a deep impression on me and have opened my perspective to the fact that Ghana is so much more than just its capital.

Naturally, the unfolding economic developments in the past few months, and the pain and suffering it has brought about for countless persons, have not left us emotionally unaffected. Hopefully, the year that has just begun will bring a positive turnaround for Ghana and its people.

I wish you all good health, peace and prosperity in 2023!

Simone Giger

Ambassador to Ghana, Benin and Togo

If you want to have more just-in-time information on the activities of the Embassy, you may follow us on [Facebook](#) (@SwissEmbassyAccra) or [Twitter](#) (@SwissAmbAccra).

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Where can I get news on Switzerland?

[Swissinfo.ch](#) is providing news on Switzerland in ten different languages.

SWI [swissinfo.ch](#)

Additionally, you may be interested in a number of publications or newsletters provided by the various Federal Departments such as:

[Federal Department of Foreign Affairs \(FDFA\)](#)

[Federal Office of Public Health \(FOPH\)](#)



For the first time, the management of the Embassy of Switzerland in Ghana has been entrusted to three female professionals. Ambassador Simone Giger (middle), Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Cooperation Simone Haeberli (left) and Tatjana Hediger, Head of Administration and Consular Services, form a team with extensive experience in fields as diverse as diplomacy, development cooperation, and consular services acquired during their time in different countries such as New Zealand, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Kenya, Peru, South Africa and Zimbabwe before arriving in Ghana.

A female-led management team is still a rarity in Switzerland's representations abroad. Hopefully Ghana will serve as an example to others!



Switzerland and Ghana signed a bilateral agreement in 2020, allowing Switzerland to compensate a part of its greenhouse gas emissions abroad. Ghana was among the first countries to sign such an agreement and is now the first country ever to actually approve a project under this agreement. The project will introduce a rice cultivation technique to Ghana that is much more climate-friendly by emitting significantly less methane gas into the atmosphere. Methane is contributing to global warming even more than CO₂. Switzerland wants to cut its own greenhouse gas emissions by half by 2030 (compared to 2006). In order to achieve this goal, various measures in Switzerland and many more projects abroad will be necessary. Do you have an idea how your business could contribute to reduced emissions in Ghana? Check if your idea is eligible here: [KliK Foundation](#).

Photo @Abdul-Rahim Naa Abdul-Lahie/ UNDPGhana

Ambassador Giger's first trip outside Accra to know the country started in October last year with a working visit to the Volta Region and crossing the Volta Lake and entering the Eastern Region. In Ho, Ambassador Giger saw the impact of Swiss support at the grassroots level when a visit was made to the Ho Unity Basic School, which is partly built with Swiss funding (through the above mentioned decentralized budget support). Her visit extended to Takla – 14km from the regional capital – where Swiss support has also delivered the newly built Hokpeta Community-based Health Planning and Services Center. These were aside meetings with Volta Regional Minister and the Municipal Chief Executive of Ho.



“I don't want to be Ambassador of Switzerland to Accra only, but Ambassador to the whole Ghana”



In November 2022 Ambassador Giger paid a working visit to the Ashanti and Bono Regions, where Switzerland supports various projects. In the Ashanti Region, she visited the wood and furniture testing lab at the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana. The lab is the first of its kind in West-Africa: a top-notch technical facility with highly motivated staff – many of which women. It was established with technical support from Switzerland and is now able to reliably ensure that wood products meet the required standards for consumer use and protection.

In the Bono Region, the Ambassador visited the women of Kurosua No 2, a farming village 12 km from the Regional capital, where the Embassy supports an alternative livelihood project to lessen the impact of climate change on women-farmers. The Embassy trained and equipped 60 women to make various kinds of soaps to supplement their incomes. Another visit was made to Urban Council Primary School in Sunyani, which was also rebuilt partly with funding from Switzerland under the Decentralized Budget Support programme.



SWITZERLAND
UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL
2023–2024

A Plus For Peace

Priorities for Switzerland’s seat on the UN Security Council:

- **Building sustainable peace,**
- **Protecting civilians,**
- **Enhancing effectiveness,**
- **Addressing climate security.**



The second session of the Protection of Civilians Course for 2022 took off on Monday 10th October at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), with funding support from the Swiss Government. Thirty participants comprising 14 females and 16 males from 17 different countries are enrolled on the course.

The aim of the training is to enhance the capacity of participants to effectively implement Protection of Civilian mandates in peacekeeping operations to mitigate the effects of conflicts on civilians.

Ambassador Giger underscored Switzerland’s commitment to the respect for international humanitarian law and human rights. She reminded the participants that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) met for the first time in February 1863 in Geneva. Among its five members was Henry Dunant who tirelessly called for improved care for wounded soldiers in wartime. This led to the foundation of the ICRC and later in 1949 to the adoption of the Geneva Conventions and its protocols.



SECO, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, is the federal government’s center of excellence for all questions relating to the economic. SECO’s economic development cooperation has the mandate to contribute to inclusive economic growth, better institutions and fair working conditions. Ghana is a priority country of SECO’s economic development cooperation ([country program 2021-24](#)).

One of the big projects financed by SECO is the so called decentralized budget support. SECO contributes funds to a separate account under the District Assembly Common Fund. Only municipalities who manage their funds well and provide good services to their populations, can access these extra funds. Municipalities use the extra money to build or refurbish schools, kindergartens, health centers, markets or other much needed infrastructure. When we visited the market in Su-

hum (see picture) we saw that the market was much cleaner, better organized and safe to use for all. The women selling their goods were happy about the improvements and said it was now easier for them to feel safe thanks to sanitary facilities and better lighting of the market. Indeed, the place was full of economic activity and positive energy. Of course, the municipality also benefits: those traders that use the new market stalls, pay a small fee to the municipality. In economy, this is called a “productive investment”, when a municipality invests in a project that will generate an income. To this date, SECO has contributed CHF 22mio to the District Assemblies’ Common Fund.

With the aim of bringing the Embassy and its staff closer to the Swiss citizens living in Ghana, a cocktail reception was held at the residence of the Ambassador on 1 November 2022. Participating Swiss citizens got the opportunity to meet members of Embassy staff and discuss with them in an informal atmosphere.



Guichet en ligne DFAE
Online-Schalter EDA
Sportello online DFAE
Online desk FDFA

FDFA’s online desk offers Swiss nationals abroad the opportunity to request services from the comfort of their homes. It allows to enter personal details in the Register of Swiss Abroad, order confirmations, announce civil status matters and subscribe to publications.

FDFA’s online desk simplifies correspondence between Swiss nationals residing abroad and their Swiss representation.

An account must be opened in order to access the services available on our online desk.

Contact the Swiss Embassy in Ghana when you want to register or deregister as a Swiss abroad, when you need a passport, have moved or wish to apply for citizenship.

[Registration](#)

Swiss citizen and their spouses living abroad must report to the Embassy or Consulate any change affecting their civil status (marriage, divorce, birth, death, change of name, etc.).

[Civil status affairs](#)

To ensure that you can be reached quickly if necessary, it is important that your contact information (address, phone number, email) is kept up to date.

[Change of Address](#)

A new series of Swiss passports was launched on 31 October 2022. It features a completely new design and contains updated security features.

Previous series will no longer be issued but they remain valid until their date of expiry

Biometric passports containing a chip with photo, fingerprints and signature of the bearer are printed in Switzerland. However, biometric data are collected by the Embassy of Switzerland in Accra.

Should you need a new Swiss identity document, please refer to the instructions on our webpage.

[Swiss identity documents](#)



Approximately 780'000 Swiss citizens abroad currently benefit from the wide range of services provided by a global network of representations offering advice and support.

The FDFA Helpline is also on hand to answer queries 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Now there's a new app that makes staying in touch even easier: SwissInTouch keeps Switzerland at your fingertips.

[SwissInTouch](#)

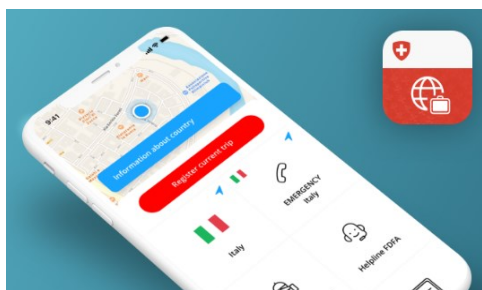
For emergency situations:

24-hour Swiss government Helpline (Tel: +41 800 24 7 365) assists Swiss citizens.

Travel Admin is the new app developed by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs to replace the Itineris app.

It helps you to prepare your trip and assists you while travelling

[Travel Admin](#)



Ghanaian citizens and foreign nationals residing in Ghana who need biometric Schengen Visas to travel to Switzerland can apply through:

[VFS Global](#)

Swiss Review magazine is distributed free of charge, online or print, among Swiss citizen register at the Embassy of Switzerland in Accra.

It provides information of an official nature as well as information of general interest to citizens living abroad.

[Swiss Review](#)

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